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ABSTRACT

An explorative, qualitative study regarding the concerns of nine beginning primary school teachers in Belgium used a combination of two techniques--a log-book and interviews--to explore the types of concerns held by these teachers. Teachers' expressions of what concerned them were reformulated into prototype-sentences, built up from sentence-elements comprising the categories of social interactions with parents, principals, colleaques, and pupils; teaching; discipline; evaluation; lesson preparation; and lack of time. These categories accounted for more than 90 percent of all documented concerns. Teachers also expressed task-concerns, self-concerns, and pupil-concerns. (Author/CB)

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A description of concerns of beginning teachers
The results of a qualitative study with some methodological considerations

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Abstract

This paper includes a summary of the course and the results of an explorative study of the concerns of beginning primary school teachers in Belgium. This study made use of a combination of two techniques, namely a log-book and interviews. The analysis of the data is was based on a qualitative method. In order to reach as near as possible to the essence of each concern, the teachers' expressions were reformulated by the researchers into prototype-sentences. Each prototype-sentence is built up with a number of sentence-elements, which entails, from beginning to end, an increasing concretisation of the concern in question. An analysis of these sentence-elements has lead to thirteen categories in which more than 90 % of all the collected concerns could be placed. The evolution of these concerns during the first year of professional practice was mostly influenced by situational factors, such as the visit of an inspector or a meeting with parents. Finally, some implications are formulated concerning the support of beginning teachers.

In june 1986 a dissertation was finished under my direction by Stefaan Gruwez, a graduate (B.A.) student in educational sciences. This dissertation is part of a series of three, that are focused on the concerns of beginning teachers in Belgium. The study of Stefaan Gruwez is especially focused on one group of these, the primary school teachers.

In this presentation we summarise the design and the results of this study with special attention to the methodological problems. For a complete report, the reader is referred to the original text of the dissertation (Gruwez, 1986).

1. Design and course of the study

Research on the concerns of teachers, as reported in the literature, has mostly made use of questionnaires, diaries or interviews.

These approaches are necessary, at first since drawing up a **questionnaire** requires a certain forgoing acquaintance with the phenomenon to be studied. This acquaintance is mostly obtained by way of explorative research. If this is absent, it is possible that questions may be asked which are not plausible for the examined group of teachers, or that there are no questions asked for concerns which are present with many of them. An exploration of the literature (Veenman, 1982 and 1984) shows that such explorative research concerning the Belgian teachers is still rare. The research that has been done, has focused on other groups than those which are involved in this study: mostly teachers in other countries with an educational system and support that differs from that in Belgium. For analogous reasons, it did not seeme to be justified to use an existing questionnaire, which had been constructed for another population (p.e. the Teachers Concerns Questionnaire: Hall, George and Rutherford, 1979).

Based on this reasoning, it is obvious that our study had to have an explorative character. The two remaining research techniques, namely the **diary** and the **interview**, are very usable for such an approach. In this study we opted for a **combination** of both techniques.

Our study took place during the school-year '84-'85. The teachers involved had been asked to fill out a page from a kind of log-book every week. On that page they noted their professional concerns at that moment. The teachers had to deliver these notes immediately back to the researcher. In this way we avoided the possibility of teachers still being in the possession of the previous weeks page of their log-book while they were filling out the next one. Thus, contamination from one week to the other could be restricted to a minimum.

After a few weeks - in principle every half-term - we interviewed the teachers. Beforehand, the researcher studied the pages of the log-book of the

teacher in question. During the interview, he asked the teacher for more information about the concerns in the log-book. This could be an explanation of what he had written down, but also an explanation of the context in which a concern arose or the situational factors that stood in relation to the origin of a concern (e.g. the visit of an inspector). Sometimes during the interview new concerns were expressed, which were not mentioned in the log-book. These concerns were noted as well.

The combination of log-book and interview has the advantage that weak points of each research technique are more or less compensated for by the other. An interview permits exploration in more detail of the concerns which have been expressed. On the other hand, an interview can not be done frequently with many teachers, due to its work-intensive character. The use of a log-book, on the other hand, offers the advantage of a regular and frequent registration of concerns. This is especially important in the search for evolutions in concerns. Besides, the examined teacher can be reminded of concerns by introducing a section from his log-book during the interview. This step can contribute to validation of the data from the log-book.

The use of two data collection techniques, of which at least one can be regarded as very work-intensive, has the consequence that only a small number of beginning teachers could be involved in the study. However, this small number may be not an objection, because of the already mentioned explorative character of this study.

The **selection** of the beginning teachers to be studied was based in part on practical criteria. Because the interviewer was living in West-Vlaanderen, teachers of this province had been chosen. Our study started with twelve teachers. But for different reasons three of them fell out. Thus, finally, nine beginning teachers remained: three males and six females. Five of them had full-time positions in self contained classrooms. Three others had "duo-jobs", that means that they worked half-time in one class. The last one was a "mobile" teacher, who was giving the same kind of lessons in twelve different classrooms.

2. Construction of prototype-sentences

The interviews were recorded on audio-tape and afterwards they were transcribed. This means that actually two different kinds of written sources were available, namely the log-books and the texts of the interviews. For the final analysis, the information from both sources was transformed into prototype-sentences.

The first step to do this was the **definition of the units of analysis**. Such a unit of analysis had to be the expression of one single concern. This unit can, from case to case, correspond with a whole sentence from the log-book, with a part of a sentence or with a combination of sentences. Parts which were not a representation of a concern, but which stood in relation to the situation that leads to a concern, have not been transcribed into prototype-sentences. This information, however, was of great use for the adequate formulation of the prototype-sentences.

The starting-point was in fact not exclusively the exact formulation of a concern as expressed by the teachers in the interviews, or their notes in the log-book. Based on the comments on and the supplements to the sections from the log-book given by the teachers during the interviews, it was obvious that those formulations were often a defective representation of what they really intended to express.

Therefore we used a **qualitative method**, in which the researcher reaches as near as possible to the essential of each concern. This means that he is not only interested in what is written black on white in the log-book or in the text of the interview, but also in the comments and supplements given by the teacher himself and in announcements about the circumstances in which the concern arose. Besides, it should not be lost from sight that the researcher himself, during the period of study, held a view of the work-situation of each teacher, and a more personal relationship was established. All this permits the researcher to better understand the expressions of concern of the teacher, so to say from inside, and to give them an adequate standardised formulation in a **prototype-sentence**.

What does it look like, such a prototype-sentence? It is constructed from a number of elements, which contain, from beginning to end, a continuously concretisation of the concern. What elements should constitute the prototype-sentences was decided a posteriori, based upon a so-called material-sensitive approach. This means that there is no a priori outline of a number of elements. The elements and their sequence are defined as a function of the data. The construction of the prototype-sentences is the result of a repeated attempt to order the data in a proper way.

The first element of a prototype-sentence makes clear if it is about a self-concern, a task-concern or a pupil-concern. This element was given the code-name "**broad concern**". The classification used is, as known, based upon the work of Frances Fuller (1969). In analyzing the data, we experienced her classification very appropriate for the concerns resulting from this study. The already mentioned qualitative method was useful to find out that, in some cases

in which a teacher at first sight expressed a task-concern, in fact he was expressing a self-concern.

An example will illustrate this. One of the teachers involved in the study wrote in his log-book: "I don't know how to explain to the parents of children with learning difficulties why the results of their son or daughter are so weak". At first sight, this can be considered as a task-concern. However, during the interview, the teacher in question told that he was afraid that the parents would consider him the cause of the weak results. He was afraid of a meeting with those parents because, being a beginning teacher, he needed to avoid a negative reputation. In this light the written comment clearly does not refer to a task-concern, but instead to a self-concern.

The second element of the prototype-sentences is a further specification of the "broad concerns". Certain "**domains**" have been distinguished to which the concerns can be related. Again, a material-sensitive approach was chosen: there is no a priori outline of a number of categories, the categories are defined as a function of the data. In the end, eleven "domains" were distinguished, namely (1) teaching, (2) social interaction, (3) evaluation, (4) discipline, (5) preparation of lessons, (6) fear of failure, (7) information about the practical way of working in the school, (8) keeping the job, (9) lack of time, (10) compassion with some of the pupils, and (11) organizational aspects of the teachers task. The concern in the example we mentioned before, belongs to the domain "social interaction".

These "domains" have been filled in independently of the "broad concerns". This means that a concern in the "domain" "social interaction" can be as easily a self-concern, a task-concern or an impact-concern. Theoretically this leads to thirty-three possible combinations of the first and the second elements of the prototype-sentences (three "broad concerns" combined with eleven "domains"). In fact, only twenty of these combinations appeared in the data set of this study.

In a third element of the prototype-sentences is represented if the concern is particularly related to one or more specific persons. For example, there are concerns about social interaction with the parents of the pupils, or with the principal. This element - we have given the code-name "**against who**" - represents a further specification of the information from the first and the second elements. The categories which appear most in it are (1) parents, (2) the principal, (3) colleagues and (4) pupils. Our example of the teacher who is afraid to explain to parents why their childrens results are so weak, is an illustration of the first category of the sentence-element "against who", namely "parents".

Sometimes these persons are still more precisely defined. To take down this information into the prototype-sentences, a next element was added with the code-name "more precisely defined". In our example the parents in question were more precisely defined by the specification "of children with learning difficulties".

The element "more precisely defined" is directly related to "against who" and is completely inferior to it. Here too, the categories of the element "against who" and those of "more precisely defined" have been formulated a posteriori, based upon a material-sensitive approach.

This is also the fact for the element "**in relation to what**". Its content also is a further specification of the expressed concern. Thus teachers can have self-concerns ("broad concern"), about their interaction ("domain"), with the parents ("against who"), of pupils with learning difficulties ("more precisely defined"), in relation to the evaluation results ("in relation to what").

Finally, there are two elements in the prototype-sentence which are usable to take down all addendant specifications expressed by the teachers. They have been called "specification 1" and "specification 2". These elements have not been filled out always and the way in which they have depends on the specification given by the teacher in the formulation of his concern and in his additional comments and supplements. In our example, "specification 1" contains the information that the teacher in question was afraid that the parents should consider him as the cause of the weak results of their children. In "specification 2" we noted that this teacher, being a beginner, could better avoid a negative reputation.

The **material-sensitive approach** was used also for the classification of the elements themselves. The choice of the elements to be taken down in the prototype-sentences has been done a posteriori and the main purpose was to have a place for all relevant information about the expressed concern.

To further illustrate a second example of the tranposition to a prototype-sentence follows. In a teachers log-book we find : "I experienced that my available knowledge about history is insufficient for a smart pupil of the second class." During the interview, the teacher mentioned that he felt uncertain about this. This concern was transposed as follows:

- "broad concern" : self
- "domain" : teaching
- "against who" : pupils
- "more precisely defined" : smart
- "in relation to what" : uncertainty
- "specification 1" : lack of available knowledge
- "specification 2" : about history

The fact that each prototype-sentence is built up with the same elements, which appear in an invariable order, and that for the description of each element we used invariable but a posteriori formed categories, has the advantage that concerns are formulated in the same way and that equal formulations refer to equal concerns. This correspondance between the content of the expressed concern and the way in which it is formulated is possible because of the use of prototype-sentences. This correspondance is surely not present in the exact representation of what has been in the log-book or has been said in the interviews.

This correspondance made it possible to process the collected data on a micro-computer. A data base made up of all prototype-sentences has been created with a number of other data for identification purposes: e.g. the name of the teacher, the source (log-book or interview), and the date on which the concern was expressed.

One more point needs to be made about this procedure: it is essential that the transposition of each concern in a prototype-sentence be **valid and reliable.** As already mentioned, this transposition is not only based upon the exact formulation given by the teachers in the log-book or the interview. In the qualitative method that has been used, acquaintance with the teacher and his work-situattion is essential to develop the most accurate prototype-sentences.

For that reason, it was not possible - in terms of controlling reliability of the transpositions into prototype-sentences in this development phase - to put two persons separately on to this work and then afterwards check out if they came out with the same results.

On the other hand, there was heavy emphasis on achieving high reliability and consensus. Therefore a section taken from one of the log-books and interviews was discussed with three graduate students who were working on a similar topic. Taking into account all the addendant data that the person working on this study could provide, all concerns from this section were transposed into prototype-sentences. Then, different options were discussed till a consensus had been achieved. This procedure has been repeated with different sections till the members of the group came relatively quickly to

identical transpositions. Thus it was taken for granted that each researcher had been trained sufficiently to transcribe concerns into prototype-sentences in a valid and reliable way.

3. The concerns of beginning teachers

In the processing of the results, two questions have been asked:

(1) what are the concerns of beginning teachers during their first year of teaching?

(2) is there an evolution in those concerns?

For an answer to the first question, a check was made of how often the teachers, involved in the study, expressed respectively **self-concerns**, **task-concerns** or **pupil-concerns**. The relative frequency of each of these categories of the first element of the prototype-sentences was calculated. This was done for each teacher separately. Afterwards the average was calculated for the nine teachers together. The results are represented in table 1.

Table 1: The relative frequency of the "broad concerns" for each teacher separately and the average proportion for the nine teachers together

"Broad concerns"	Beginning teachers									Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
self	37.0	20.8	18.6	43.9	52.9	38.7	52.8	67.2	33.9	44.5
task	54.8	77.9	72.9	36.8	46.7	60.5	45.4	29.3	59.7	51.5
pupils	8.2	1.3	8.5	19.3	.4	.8	1.8	3.5	6.4	4.0

Because of the small number of techers involved in this study these distributions were not checked for statistical significance. The results show that these beginning teachers in their first year of teaching were particularly concerned about themselves and their task. Pupil-concerns were identified rarely (average 4 %) and task-concerns were more frequent than self-concerns (51.5 % against 44.5 %).

However, when the data from teacher to teacher are examined, it is remarkable to see the extent to which these averages are the result of combinations of very divergent percentages. Thus there is a variation in the

weight of the self-concerns from 67.2 % (teacher H) to 18.6 % (teacher C), the task-concerns ranged from 77.9 % (teacher B) to 29.3 % (teacher H) and the pupil-concerns ranged from 19.3 % (teacher D) to 0.4 % (teacher E).

A possible explanation for these divergent percentages may be the fact that during the first year of teaching, there is a shifting of concerns and this does not happen to all of the teachers at the same moment. Accordingly as this shift occurs sooner or later, one becomes for the whole of the year a lower or higher weight of concerns than in the beginning of the school-year.

To get a **more detailed picture of the concerns**, several elements of the prototype-sentences have been combined. In this way, the number of categories of concerns which can be distinguished, increases, and the nature of the concerns in each category becomes more specific.

Because the elements in one prototype-sentence are the representation of a progressive concretisation of a concern, that started with a combination of the first and the second sentence-element, namely "broad concerns" and "domains". The combination of both theoretically gives rise to 33 categories (three "broad concerns" and eleven "domains"). Twenty of them actually appeared in the results of the study. Then, these twenty combinations, on their turn, have been combined with the possible alternatives of the third sentence-element ("against who") etc.

Through further combination of alternatives of sentence-elements, one gets finally to a large number of categories, with each representing a specific group of concerns. The proportion of each category in relation to the total number of concerns becomes of course very small as more and more sentence-elements are combined. Finally, one comes to a set of very specific categories, each with a low frequency, and its contribution to the weight of the whole set of concerns is minimal.

Therefore, there was the need for a limit in reducing and dividing. From the moment that categories appeared which enclosed less than 3 % of the total number of concerns the combining of sentence-elements was ceased. This included "pupil-concerns", one of the "broad concerns" from the first sentence-element, that constituted a seperate category, which represented an average of about 4 % of the concerns. Each combination of this "broad concern" with an alternative of the "domains" (the second sentence-element) leads to a category with an average of less than 3 % of the concerns.

Regarding the "task-concerns", seven categories could be distinguished : five through combination with the "domains" "teaching", "discipline", "evaluation", "preparation of lessons" and "lack of time", and two through combination with the domain "social interaction" and with two alternatives of "against who", namely "pupils" and "other persons".

Regarding the "self-concerns", five categories could be constituded : one through combination with the "domain" "teaching", and the other four through combinations with "social interaction" (one of the "domains") and with four alternatives of the sentence-element "against who", namely : "parents", "principal", "colleagues" and "pupils".

The frequency of the thirteen categories in the total number of concerns is represented in the last column of table 2.

Table 2: The thirteen most important categories of concerns and their weight in the total number of concerns

Sentence-elements			Weight in the total number of concerns
"broad concern"	"domain"	"against who"	
self	social interaction	parents	6.75 %
		principal	8.35 %
		colleagues	9.47 %
		pupils	4.66 %
	teaching		3.42 %
task	teaching		20.71 %
	social interaction	pupils	4.86 %
		others	3.84 %
	discipline		10.05 %
	evaluation		3.71 %
	preparation of lessons		5.88 %
	lack of time		3.41 %
pupils			4.0 %

It is remarkable that 90.52 % of all of the concerns appearing in the study, could be placed in one of these thirteen categories.

When calculating the weight of these thirteen categories for each teacher seperately, **wide inter-individual differences** can be noticed. For example, the weight of the category "self concerns in relation to the social interaction with colleagues" varies from 0.7 % for one teacher, to 28.6 % for another one, with an average of 8.3 %. The weight of the category "task-concerns in relation

with preparation of lessons" varies from 0.0 % to 22.2 %, with an average of 5.9 %.

This finding is in line with what has been found in relation to the "broad concerns" on their own. Here, we supposed that a possible cause might be the fact that a shift in concerns arises systematically during the first year of teaching, but not to everybody at the same moment.

Another possibility may be the fact of differences between teachers, in terms of such things as personal aspects or characteristics of the work-situation. For example, a teacher with difficult pupils will probably have more concerns about "discipline" than a colleague who is teaching a quiet class. Or a teacher who does not get on well with the principal will have more concerns about the interaction with the principal. It could not be checked directly if this assumption was correct, because such factors as the teachers perception of the pupils or their relationship with the principal were not studied. However it could be checked out if there was an increase of self-concerns about the interaction with the principal, when this person attended an activity in the class. From such an increase and from the accompanying comments given by a teacher in an interview, it is possible to formulate indirectly some conclusions. However, it is necessary to examine the evolution in the concerns.

4. Searching for an evolution in the concerns of beginning teachers

In other studies, for example Fullers (1975), an evolution in the concerns of beginning teachers during their training and the first years of their practice has been discussed. In the beginning they typically express more self-concerns. The number of these concerns progressively decrease and task-concerns increase. After a certain time, these concerns on their turn decrease and pupil-concerns become more important.

Steps were taken to check out if a similar evolution could be found among the teachers who were involved in this study. First, only for the "broad concerns", but afterwards also for more specific categories as described earlier in this paper.

However, there was a problem. The number of concerns, expressed by the teachers in their log-book or during the interviews, was rather high in the beginning (an average of 50 in the first term), but there was a sharp decline near the end (an average of 15 in the third term). If one should calculate with absolute numbers on the evolution in the concerns, then this would give rise to

a misrepresentation. For each concern there would probably be found a decrease, even when the relative weight of it increases during the school-year.

To correct this, use was made of the proportion of each "broad concern" in relation to the complete number of uttered concerns during the period of a half-term. This split up in half-terms roughly corresponds with the time between two interviews. A disadvantage of this correction however is that the weight of each individual concern is rather high for periods next to the end of the study. Thus, small nuances in the formulations given by the teachers or mistakes in the transposition to prototype-sentences, could have high repercussions in the results.

Be that as it may, figure 1 is a representation of the analysis and apparent evolution of the "**broad concerns**" regarded on their own. The horizontal axis shows the split into half-terms, the scale on the vertical axis represents the weight of each "broad concern" in terms of the total number of uttered concerns. The solid line, the dashed line and the dotted line represents respectively the weight of the task-concerns, the self-concerns and the pupil-concerns. All these figures are averages of the scores of the nine teachers involved.

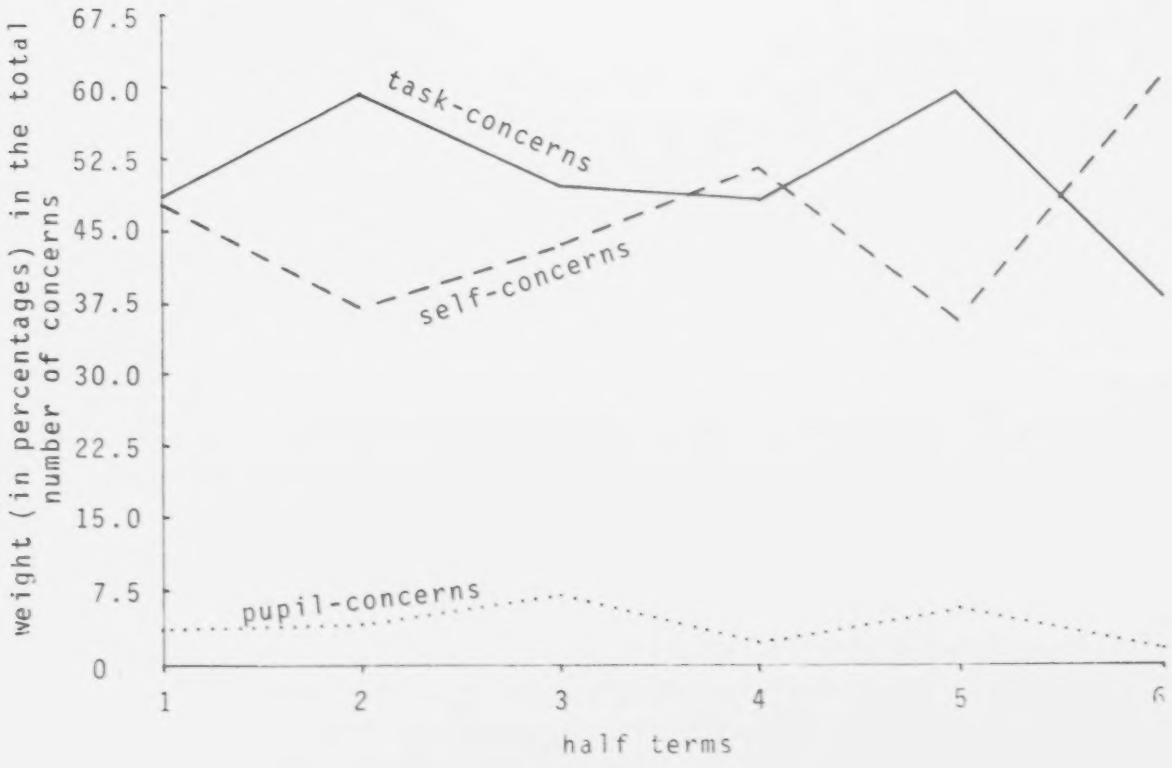

Figure 1: The evolution of the "broad concerns" during the study period

During the whole school-year the weight of the pupil-concerns stays on a lower level in comparison to the other two "broad concerns". On the average, there are more task-concerns expressed than self-concerns. These findings are in line with the results found by Fuller : the self-concerns which got the upper hand during the training, make place for task-concerns during the first year on the job.

Yet there is one big exception. At the end of the school-year there were more self-concerns formulated than task-concerns. It should be noted again that the number of uttered concerns is very low in the second half of the third term. Thus, one concern more or less could have a bigger influence on the weight of one of the broad concerns in the whole, then in the beginning of the school-year. When controlling the frequences of the three "broad concerns", it is visible that the absolute number of self-concerns in the second half of the third term is not much higher than in the first half. Besides, an increase of self-concerns at the end of the first year of practice can be explained by regarding the fear of these teachers for keeping their jobs. This can be confirmed by the fact that the increase of self-concerns at the end of the school-year is nearly completely ascribed to the concerns of the "domain" (the second element of the prototype-sentence) "job".

In analysing the data, the evolution of **each of the thirteen categories** of concerns was checked out. A graph was drawn, analogous to the graph in figure 1, for each of these categories.

What was the outcome ? For some of the combinations, there was found an evolution that could be explained in terms of the already mentioned qualitative analysis. We already spoke about the self-concerns in relation to the job. Their weight increases in the last half-term, probably because the teachers are afraid to be out of work next school-year.

"Task-concerns in relation to teaching" decrease in the second half of the third term. This is probably related to the fact that in this period the teachers were mainly occupied with repetitions, instead of teaching new subject-matters. The concerns in relation to discipline also progressively decrease. This can be explained because the teachers established a certain routine in keeping discipline and because the pupils began to know them better.

At the end of the school-year, the teachers expressed relatively more task-concerns in relation to lack of time. Only the second half of the last term is an exception. Perhaps at this point the teachers were ready after all, or they became reconciled with the lack of time. Concerns in relation to evaluation, finally, are relatively frequent during periods of exams.

It is remarkable that, to develop explanation of the findings, the knowledge acquired by the researcher of the teacher and his work-situation plays a big

part in the interpretation. Also important are the situational factors and the comments given by the teachers during the interviews.

For the other combinations, no clear patterns of evolution were found. Generally, the weight of the concerning category in the whole of the concerns, differed widely from one teacher to another. In these cases, it did not make sense to calculate an average.

In an attempt to find another explanation for the collected data, the evolution of each of the thirteen categories of concerns was examined for each teacher separately. Particularly attention was paid to any increase in the weight of the concerns in each category. Everytime such an increase appeared, it was checked to see if it could be explained by a situational factor. For most of the categories, this seemed to be possible. Exceptions were the following combinations : "self-concerns in relation to teaching" and "task-concerns in relation to teaching".

Increases of "self-concerns in relation to the interaction with parents" were often linked with the occurence of a meeting with the parents about the progress of their child. An increase of "self-concerns in relation to the interaction with the principal" was relatable to a visit by the principal to the classroom. "Task-concerns in relation to evaluation", as already mentioned, increased during periods in which exams were scheduled. Pupil-concerns appeared particularly frequent when there were specific problems with one or more pupils of the class.

5. Conclusion

What can be concluded of this? The results in relation to the "broad concerns" are in line with the findings of Fuller. In the first year of their practice, beginning teachers particularly expressed task-concerns, a slightly fewer self-concerns and only a few pupil-concerns. Only the results of the last half term show another trend, but this can be explained by the understandable fear of the teachers over the possibility of loosing their jobs.

In contrast with Fuller, we don't find any indications of a systematic evolution of this "broad concerns". However, this doesn't mean that there is none. The short period of study can have the consequence that shifts over a longer period remains unnoticed. Besides, Fullers study covered five years.

The results in relation to the categories of concerns formed by combining the alternatives of the elements of the prototype-sentences, are very difficult to interpret. It appeared that the evolution in the weight of these categories,

differed widely from one teacher to another. In addition, specific situational factors appeared to play an important part.

Finally, we would like to point out that the results of this study have to be approached with a certain circumspection for several reasons. First, the number of involved teachers was too small to generalize the results. Further, we considered the research-technique we used as experimental. Also the role of the interviewer is very important, but difficult to control. His interventions could have an influence on the course of the interview and on what was actually said.

There are many steps in the processing of the data, in which mistakes could be made. For example, the outline of the sections in the log-book and in the texts of the interviews must be done according to a certain concern. Or by the transcription to prototype-sentences small mistakes might have the consequence that the identified concerns are placed in a wrong category. The fact that we did not take our stand on the exact formulations from the log-book or the texts of the interviews, might be a weak point. However, we regard it at the same time as a strength because, in this manner, we come closer to the essential of what is really on the mind of the teacher.

For all these reasons, we regard this study as a first exploration of a promising domain and as a starting point for further research.

6. Literature

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Epilogue

This study has been presented on the International Research Seminar on Internal Change Facilitators (Center for Educational Policy and Innovation, Catholic University of Leuven, June 2 - 5, 1986). The discussion on the seminar was especially focused on the way research-data have been collected and processed. It was more specific about (1) the use of the log-books and interviews, (2) the transcription of the formulations, used by the teachers into prototype-sentences and (3) the computer-processing.

The seminar participants thought the **use of log-books and interviews** were interesting methods to record the concerns of teachers. These techniques permit a qualitative description of the concerns. Therefore, concrete examples are available to document the presence of certain concerns. The formulations are coming from the teachers theirselves. The words which are used and the circumstances that are referred to, are much more recognizable than would be the case when registrering concerns with an instrument such as the Teachers Concerns Questionnaire. This is especially important when the objective is to make clear to policy-makers and supporters how teachers are facing their job.

Secondly, log-books and interviews are a useful complement to instruments such as the Teachers Concerns Questionnaire. The use of it permits one to validate the knowledge acquired through such a questionnaire. On the other side, it is possible - using the log-books and the interviews - to get on the track of concerns for which there are no questions asked in the Teachers Concerns Questionnaire. This could lead to a refinement of this instrument. This is especially important when such an instrument is going to be used in new situations or for new populations. This was indeed the case in the study described in this paper (see: 1. Design and course of the study).

The reformulation of the concerns which have been found into **prototype-sentences** made up a second subject of discussion. The fact that these prototype-sentences are built up from a number of sentence-parts which contain from beginning to end a further specification of the concerns, makes it possible to analyse the data on different levels of generalization: on the one side the evolution on the level of the "broad concerns" (self-task-pupil) can be checked out, and on the other side it is possible to detect shifts in relation to more specific aspects such as "against who" and "with relation to what" a concern arises.

Especially this last possibility opens interesting perspectives. For example, as one develops a more detailed picture of the concerns of (beginning) teachers, there are clearer points of contact for the set up of support. This

is surely the case when one has information about the circumstances in which a concern arises.

The study described here provides an illustration of this. The qualitative method used for the construction of the prototype-sentences implies that the announcements by the teacher himself about the circumstances in which a concerns arises are taken into consideration. In addition, the researcher acquires a better view of the work-situation of each teacher. All of this permits a more adequate reformulation of the expressed concerns (see: 2. Construction of prototype-sentences). In the prototype-sentences themselves this kind of information has been inserted most often in the sentence-elements "specification 1" or "specification 2".

What points of contact for the support of beginning teachers have been found? From the observed pattern that changes in concerns are often linked with facts in relation to the concrete work-situation, it can be concluded that the support should take into account that concrete work-situation. Thus, a passe-partout-program in which a large number of teachers of different schools participate in the same activities, is not efficient. But there may be thought about a kind of "coaching" whereby a more skilled teacher acts as a coach for a beginning colleague. In this matter a coach who teaches the same or similar subject-matter to a similar group of pupils is preferred. This coach should be open to the concerns of his less experienced colleague and play in on it by way of conversations, advise, etc.

Studies such as the one described here, but done on a larger scale, could provide useful indications for the way in which a coach sould design his support-tasks. There can be a search for key-situational facts, which evocate an increase of certain concerns for most beginning teachers. Some key possibilities have been identified in this study: the first visit of an inspector and the first meeting with the parents about the progress of the pupils. The coach could play in on those by preparing for the meeting with the parents together with the beginning teacher, or by telling him what to do during the visit of the inspector. Perhaps the coach could be present or afterwards offer some reflections on what happened. Indeed, such forms of support are answers to what we have described as characteristics of a "good" support in another publication concerning innovations: e.g. the validity for the proper concrete work-situation, the chance of self-initiative from the person in question, cooperation with others (Janssens, 1980).

Finally, one remark about the **computer-processing**. Here, a problem was the memory-capacity of the computer we used (an APPLE II-C micro-computer). It was a devil of a job to make it possible to store all the prototype-sentences. We'd liked to provide some of them with additional comments, but for this there

wasn't enough space. In the future, however, we will have more powerful computers. These will make it possible to pursue the search for the influence of situational facts.

Literature

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Appendix

A page from a log-book:

Name:

Date:

Don't write here	Note here your concerns about teaching at this moment
	Today I realised that my pupils didn't understand what I taught about the calculation of the circumference of a circle. How do I have to teach this to them?
	I experienced that my available knowledge about history is insufficient for a bright pupil of the second class.
	Next week there is a meeting with the parents of my pupils. What will be the reaction of the father of the boy who will miss one's remove? Would he consider me the cause?